

Oslo, 15th April 2011, - Near zero malaria deaths achievable by 2015 – innovation and partnership is key.

More than 200 malaria experts and government officials are convening in the Norwegian capital on Tuesday 12 April to advise policy-makers how to move towards the target of zero malaria deaths by 2015.

In the last decade, one-third of 106 malaria-endemic countries have seen a 50 per cent decrease in malaria cases where comprehensive interventions have been carried out. Curbing malaria is essential to achieving the United Nations Millennium Development Goal of reducing child mortality. Based on its success, the Roll Back Malaria Partnership has set the target of near zero malaria deaths by 2015, thus exceeding the goals of the MDGs.

“This is entirely possible,” explains Dr Awa Marie Coll-Seck, Executive Director of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership, the global framework for coordinated action against the disease.

“Achieving near zero deaths will require stronger country ownership and adequate global support. Intensified and sustained malaria control will contribute to the achievement of six of the eight Millennium Development Goals,” she adds. Nevertheless, more than 3 billion people, half of humanity, are still affected by the disease which is fully preventable and treatable.

“Malaria is curable, and no one should die from this illness in the 21st century,” says Sven Mollekleiv, President of the Norwegian Red Cross, hosting the conference. He adds, “To tackle malaria, we need to think of it as an investment case that offers tremendous long-term yield. We need to implement and facilitate access to health services as a core human right.”

Malaria is a global health emergency. Nearly 800,000 people die of malaria every year, most of them children under the age of five. It perpetuates the vicious cycle of poverty in the developing world, and affects mostly poor women and children. Malaria-related illnesses and mortality cost Africa’s economy alone 12 billion US dollars a year, and consume as much as 40 per cent of public health expenditure in countries where it is endemic.

Comprehensive interventions are proven to reduce the number of malaria cases. In the last decade, 289 million mosquito nets were delivered to sub-Saharan Africa, enough to cover 76 per cent of the at-risk population. Additionally, diagnostic testing has become more accessible. More than a third of malaria cases reported from the public sector in Africa in 2009 had been confirmed with a diagnostic test compared to less than 5 per cent at the beginning of the decade.

“We have found that the key to decreasing malaria cases is the follow-up of the households

after the distribution of the mosquito nets, to ensure they are being used properly. Thousands of volunteers do this on a daily basis,” adds Mollekleiv.

In one African country, they have gone a step further. The Kenya Red Cross Society home management of malaria project has meant 82 per cent of reported fever cases received effective treatment within 24 hours by trained volunteers in the villages. This project exemplifies what can be achieved with partnership. Due to its success, the Kenyan government is now rolling this method out countrywide.

The Secretary General of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), Bekele Geleta, draws on this positive achievement and urges the world community to forge new partnerships to work together.

“The global community has made real progress in the fight against malaria, with bold partnerships, innovative thinking, leadership and increased resource availability; we can do more, do better and reach further.”

Source: [Red Cross](#)